



Spencer Ballus, his family, friends and fellow Scouts take a break from the renovation to pose for a photo.

Eagle Scout spruces up Diggs-Latham

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Spencer Ballus' Eagle Scout service project has transformed Diggs-Latham Elementary School.

Thanks to Spencer, one of the brick walls in front of the school is adorned with four colorful metal cutouts that depict drama, music, dance and art – the magnet school's learning themes. Metal benches with butterfly designs serve as the centerpiece of two garden areas that have been planted with flowers and set with stepping stones. Spencer and his team also spruced up a third garden area. All of it has considerably brightened the look of the school.

"It's wonderful," fourth-grade teacher Beth Sapp said to Spencer. "The kids brag about when they get to sit on your benches. You set such a good example."

After Spencer, who is an eighth-grader at Hanes Magnet School, decided that he wanted to focus on a beautification project at a school, he approached several schools that he thought might be well-served by such a project.

"I wanted my project to have the biggest impact it could," he said.

Principal Donna Cannon thought Spencer's ideas were perfect for the arts and global studies magnet school. She invited Spencer to come talk about the possibilities. Some posters on a front wall that proclaimed Diggs-Latham's connection to the arts had seen better days. Replacing those with something livelier seemed a good place to start. They also talked about creating a new garden area in front of the wall, making improvements to an already existing memorial garden under a nearby tree and enhancing a third garden area.

Spencer – along with family members and four other Scouts from Troop



Spencer Ballus presents a check to Donna Cannon.

719 in Lewisville – went to work on the transformation one weekend last month. The other Scouts were Duncan Hickman, who goes to Reagan High School; his younger brother, Isaac Hickman, who goes to Meadowlark Middle; Connor Fodel who goes to Jefferson Middle; and Jake Reilly who goes to Paisley IB Magnet School. Jake's younger sister, Taylor, who goes to Meadowlark Elementary, also pitched in, along with Spencer's grandparents and uncle.

"It was wonderful," said Spencer, referring to all the help he received. He estimates that, by the end of the day, about 200 people hours had been invested in the project.

When school dismissed on the Friday before the workday, Cannon had told everyone to be on the lookout for a surprise when they returned on Monday. Everyone was delighted to see the transformation. Many found the emblems on the wall particularly striking, Cannon said.

Spencer, the son of Tom and Paige Ballus, raised \$2,200 for the project, largely by hosting a Greek dinner at his church. In the end, the project cost about \$1,000. Spencer presented Cannon with a check for the remaining \$1,200 to use however she wanted to help the school.

Spencer, 13, envisions becoming a marine biologist. For now, he studies the fish in his 25-gallon aquarium. At school, he is a member of the Technology Student

Association. A dragster that he designed and built last year won first place in its category at the association's regional competition. This summer, he is joining a group from Hanes that is headed to the Galapagos Islands.

New soccer club seeks funding

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Latch Key, Inc., a Winston-Salem-based nonprofit that provides young people with educational experiences that support social, emotional, physical and cognitive development, has announced the formation of the Stars Soccer Club.

The club will be a part of the Twin City Soccer League and, according to organizers, help young players improve their skills and attain their personal goals.

So that a financial burden won't be placed on families, a fundraiser has been started for the club.

Corporate and individual sponsorships for players, Stars teams and the club as a whole are being sought.



To learn more, go to www.latchkey-inc.com.

Peppers

from page B4

plague would come. The plagues revealed to the Israelites and the Egyptians that God (of the slaves) is the great "I Am." Finally, he asked for the last time his warning Pharaoh that the first born would die. Pharaoh turned a deaf ear.

Lesson: God gives Moses instructions for their redemption celebration that will mark the beginning of their new year in the first month (Abib or Nisan). On the tenth day of that month each household is to separate a year-old male unblemished lamb or goat. The small households are to share one animal.

On day 14, at twilight, the animals are to be slaughtered and roasted with bitter herbs. The blood is to be smeared on the doorposts and lintels of every household. The animal is roasted (not boiled) and served with unleavened bread. The celebratory meal is to be

eaten standing up with everyone fully clothed including sandals. This is for quick departure. If all food isn't consumed, it is to be burned before morning. As they eat this meal, the Death Angel will pass through Egypt, killing the first born. The blood on the posts and lintels will be a sign for the angel to pass over the Israelites. Thus, they named the celebration Passover. On that day annually, for every generation shall be taught their history as a way to remind them that they are because God is!

Application: The Passover for our Jewish brothers and sisters seals their identity and link to God (Yahweh). It constantly reminds them that God is their Redeemer. The sacrifice (animal) is for their salvation and the blood covers their sins. Passover also symbolizes God's love, protection and power. It gives them hope for the future. That's why the prophets always reminded them of their deliverance.

For the Christians, the roasted animal is the unbroken body of Jesus, who was without blemish. His blood was shed only once for our redemption. Our celebration is Easter that commemorates His sacrifice and resurrection for our redemption. It also unites us and represents God's love for all of His creation. Without His sacrifice and resurrection, Christians have no hope! Both practices are intentional because they represent the agony of oppression (slavery/sin) and the hope that God delivers.

Now let's consider how we tell our story to the next generation. For African Americans, the celebration is "watch night," Emancipation Day and Juneteenth. Do our children know their heritage? Every group needs to instill in the next generation their identity and link to God. He created all of us for His divine purpose. God has redeemed humanity; for without Him, we have nothing! Let's celebrate redemption intentionally!

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